

# PRESS RELEASE

Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

Fourteenth District, Michigan  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus

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## CONYERS RE-INTRODUCES THE “RESTORATION OF FAIRNESS IN IMMIGRATION ACT OF 2003”

Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee issued the following statement regarding the re-introduction of the “Restoration of Fairness in Immigration Act of 2003”:

“Since this nation’s founding, more than 55 million immigrants from every continent have settled in the United States. Immigrants work hard to make ends meet and pay taxes every day. They have lived in this country for decades, married U.S. citizens, and raised their U.S.-citizen children. Laws that single these people out for no other reason than their status as immigrants violate their fundamental right to fair treatment.

Yet, for too many years, Congress has witnessed a wave of anti-immigrant legislation, playing on our worst fears and prejudices. Since 1994, we have considered proposals to ban birthright citizenship, ban bilingual ballots, and slash family and employment based immigration, as well as to limit the number of asylees and refugees. In 1996 we passed laws denying legal residents the right to public benefits and denying immigrants a range of due process and fairness protections.

We continue to see the tragedy of September 11<sup>th</sup> used as an excuse for even more assaults on the rights of immigrants. The Justice Department is now registering certain classes of immigrants and arresting them when law abiding immigrants arrive to register. The Department is holding deportation hearings in secret and detaining immigrants even after they are ordered released. The Attorney General is reducing both the independence and number of judges that handle the appeals of immigration cases. We are fending off legislation almost daily intended to reduce if not eliminate immigration to this country.

Those who urge us to restrict the due process rights of immigrants forget the reason these rights were established in the first place. We grant due process rights to citizens and non-citizens alike; not out of some soft-hearted sentimentality, but because we believe that these rights form an important cornerstone to maintaining civilized society.

The “Restoration of Fairness in Immigration Act of 2003” furthers this proud legacy by restoring our nation’s long standing compassion for individuals seeking to build a better life and reunite with their families.

The bill restores fairness to the immigration process by making sure that each person has a chance to have their case heard by a fair and impartial decision maker. No one here is looking to give immigrants a free ride, just a fair chance.

Justice and fairness, as well as our own economic interests, demand no less.”

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